

# New Rules For Getting A Social Security Number And Card



**R**ecent provisions in law have changed the rules for assigning a Social Security number and issuing a Social Security card. This fact sheet gives the most up-to-date information available on the documents needed to apply for a Social Security number and card.

***All documents must be either originals or copies certified by the issuing agency. We cannot accept photocopies or notarized copies of documents.***

## Proof of citizenship and identity

To get a Social Security number or a replacement card, you must prove your U.S. citizenship or immigration status, age and identity. For a replacement card, proof of your U.S. citizenship and age are not required if they are already in our records. Under the new law, only certain documents can be accepted as proof of U.S. citizenship. These include your U.S. birth certificate, a U.S. passport, a Certificate of Naturalization or a Certificate of Citizenship. If you are not a U.S. citizen, different rules apply for proving your immigration status, and those rules have not changed.

Also under the new law, only certain documents can be accepted as proof of identity. An acceptable document must show your name, identifying information about you and preferably a recent photograph.

If you are a U.S. citizen, Social Security must see your:

- U.S. driver's license;
- State-issued nondriver identity card; or
- U.S. passport.

If you do not have these specific documents or cannot get a replacement for them within 10 days, we will ask to see other documents, including:

- Employee ID card;

- School ID card;
- Health insurance card (not a Medicare card);
- U.S. military ID card; or
- Adoption decree.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, Social Security must see your current U.S. immigration documents. Acceptable documents from the Department of Homeland Security include your:

- Form I-551 (includes machine-readable immigrant visa with your unexpired foreign passport);
- I-94 with your unexpired foreign passport; or
- Work permit card (I-766 or I-688B).

## Documents for a name change

If you need to change your name on your Social Security card, you must show proof of your legal name change. Documents Social Security may accept to prove a legal name change are your:

- Marriage document;
- Divorce decree specifically stating you may change your name;
- Certificate of Naturalization showing a new name; or
- Court order for a name change.

If documents you provide for a legal name change do not give enough information to identify you (date of birth or age), then you also must show two identity documents:

- One document with your old name; and
- A second document with your new legal name.

In addition to your name, these documents must contain identifying information (date of birth or age) or a recent photograph.

## Verification of birth records

Social Security must verify a birth record for all U.S.-born applicants of any age who apply for an original Social Security number. An exception is made when a parent applies for a baby's Social Security number at the hospital when the baby is born.

Social Security must also verify a birth record for U.S.-born individuals who ask to correct the date of birth on our records. To verify a birth record, Social Security will contact the office that issued it.

**NOTE:** For Social Security purposes, “U.S.-born” means a person born in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## Limits to replacement cards

You can replace your Social Security card if it is lost or stolen. You are limited to three replacement cards in a year and 10 during

your lifetime. Legal name changes and changes in noncitizen status that require card updates may not count toward these limits. Also, you may not be affected by these limits if you can prove you need the card to prevent a significant hardship.

## Contacting Social Security

For more information and to find copies of our publications, visit our website at **[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)** or call toll-free, **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.